

University of Vermont
ScholarWorks @ UVM

UVM Honors College Senior Theses

Undergraduate Theses

2019

An Evolution of Jane and Lizzie: Adaptation Studies Need to Accommodate for the Rise of Internet-Based Media

Katherine Anne Bryce

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/hcoltheses>

Recommended Citation

Bryce, Katherine Anne, "An Evolution of Jane and Lizzie: Adaptation Studies Need to Accommodate for the Rise of Internet-Based Media" (2019). *UVM Honors College Senior Theses*. 300.
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/hcoltheses/300>

This Honors College Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Theses at ScholarWorks @ UVM. It has been accepted for inclusion in UVM Honors College Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UVM. For more information, please contact donna.omalley@uvm.edu.

An Evolution of Jane and Lizzie: Adaptation Studies Need to Accommodate for the Emergence
of Internet-Based Media

Undergraduate Honors Thesis

by Katherine Bryce

University of Vermont, 2019

Advisor: Eric Lindstrom, English

Chairs: Alec Ewald, Political Science

Daniel Fogel, English

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3-4
II.	History of Film and Adaptation Studies	5-14
III.	Digital Media's Distinction from Traditional Media	15-20
IV.	General Overview of the Web-Series	21-25
V.	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> and <i>The Lizzie Bennet Diaries</i>	26-37
VI.	<i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>The Autobiography of Jane Eyre</i>	38-47
VII.	Conclusion	48-49

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Lindstrom, Professor Fogel, and Professor Ewald for their continued support and taking the time and effort to help me with this thesis, the Honors College for their continued support through this process, and my mother for reading every single draft I ever sent her way.

i. Introduction

Pride and Prejudice and *Jane Eyre* are two of the most iconic nineteenth-century novels, beloved by generation after generation. These stories are mainstays of the conversation about nineteenth-century narratives, captivating scholars and the general public alike. Over the years there have been numerous adaptations of these stories, ranging from novels to films to television, and now, web-series. I have always been fascinated with these internet-based adaptations of classic novels, taking something so fixed in its original time period and translating it to a modern setting without losing the essence of the source material. My first introduction to these stories was through *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the internet retelling of *Pride and Prejudice*. Web-series open up a new world to their viewers, inspiring people to read the texts for the first time or giving them a new perspective when re-reading. The inspiration for my thesis was to acknowledge this form of adaptation and determine how adaptation studies needs to accommodate for the rise in this new medium that breaks the mold previously established by film and television. While there are many other platforms, for the purposes of this paper I focused on YouTube, since it is the most popular and prolific in terms of content, and for many, the only source of free, online media. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* encompass different aspects of web-series, high budget versus low, first-person experience versus second-hand retellings, and different levels of plot manipulation.

Adaptation studies, as a field, is missing the key elements that make internet-based media so innovative and fresh – it has not evolved along with the objects of its analyses. Adaptation studies has fluctuated in importance over the course of its existence, but it is currently experiencing a modest resurgence. Contemporary definitions of adaptation are much more

varied, making it “one of the most dynamic fields in textual and cultural studies,”¹ yet it has not made the necessary shift to include internet-based media. Transmedia studies is beginning to influence the scope of adaptation studies, primarily in regard to traditional film and its extra-textual content – stories that are told across platforms like film, comics, books, etc. Internet-based media is still largely ignored. The internet is inextricably woven into daily life now; there is a need to analyze this new format for adapting classic texts. The current methods employed by adaptation studies fail to accommodate the recent growth in popularity of internet-based media, specifically web-series adaptations. To fully understand the web-series adaptations, adaptation studies must fully embrace transmedia storytelling and interactivity as key concepts. Adaptation studies is in the middle of reconfiguring itself, determining what of its current definitions and practices should be brought to the future of the field, and a marriage with the current practices of transmedia studies would allow for a field that can accurately reflect the objects of its analysis.

¹ Timothy Corrigan, “Defining Adaptation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, ed. Thomas Leitch (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 31.

ii. A Brief Overview of Adaptation Studies with a Sprinkling of Film History

Adaptations of classic novels have been staples of cinema since the invention of film. Some of the first films were based on narratives with which the audience was already familiar, to ease the introduction to the new experience of movie watching.² This method of film creation became so popular that copyright laws were forced to expand to include movies. The *Kalem Co. v. Harper Bros* case in 1911³ made it illegal to adapt a narrative without explicit permission – film makers from that point forward had to acquire the rights to a story before adapting it for film. The desire to see a well-loved story play out in a film setting is well established and has evolved with new advancements in cinematic technology. This same desire has transferred to internet technology, specifically the video sharing platform YouTube – leading to a rise in lower budget, short-form adaptations that play on the current conventions of internet videos, i.e. talking directly to the camera or hand-held recordings of daily life. Early film studies viewed film as inherently adaptation, assimilating and coordinating with other fields and practices to create the field as it is today.⁴ Adaptation studies used to just be film studies, but now the definition is much less clear.

Despite a general desire to see novels in motion picture form, there is critical debate over what actually qualifies as an adaptation. The line between inspiration and adaptation has always been a blurry one. There are multiple ways to look at adaptation, which Timothy Corrigan breaks into three categories – “process, product, and relationship”⁵. Adaptation can be the process of turning one media into another, the final result of transitioning one media into another, or the

² Timothy Corrigan, “Literature on screen, a history: in the gap,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, ed. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 29.

³ “*Kalem Co. v. Harper Brothers*, 222 U.S. 55 (1911).” *Justia Law*, supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/222/55/.

⁴ Corrigan, “Defining Adaptation,” 28.

⁵ Corrigan, “Defining Adaptation,” 23.

continuous relationship between media A and media B. The general consensus within the field places the most emphasis on the third category – adaptation as a relationship – which Regina Schober concisely defines: “adaptations can be understood as processes in which connections are established between two different modes of representation.”⁶ A relationship is established in which the original work and the adaptation are connected through reference and revision. There is a spectrum of adaptation as well, ranging from direct fidelity (i.e. translations) to condensations or abridgements to sequels/spinoffs/fan-fiction, etc.⁷ Adaptation as a field encompasses a wide variety of products, so it is logical to focus on the process and the relationships being formed rather than simply on the products being created. Corrigan’s definition goes deeper than just ‘relationship,’ defining adaptation as “an act of reception in which the reading or viewing of that work is actively working as a specific form of enjoyment and understanding.”⁸ Instead of just being a re-creation of the original product, adaptations should create a new relationship between point A and point B to highlight specific aspects of the original in return – a reciprocal relationship between the original text and the adaptation.

The New Wave movement in 1940s and 1950s France was one of the most important periods in film history. The French New Wave was a revolution against the previously held conventions of French film and the government’s involvement in filmmaking as a direct result of WWII.⁹ One of the most well-known and respected voices of the movement was auteur André Bazin. His most resounding contribution to film studies was the publication of the French film

⁶ Regina Schober, “Adaptation as connection – Transmediality reconsidered,” in *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 89.

⁷ Thomas Leitch, “Adaptation and Intertextuality, or, what isn’t an adaptation, and what does it matter?” in *A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation*, ed. Deborah Cartmell (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 1.

⁸ Corrigan, “Defining Adaptation,” 23

⁹ Richard Neupert, “The French New Wave,” in *Traditions in World Cinema*, ed. Linda Bradley, R. Barton Palmer, and Steven Jay Schneider, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 41.

journal, *Cahiers du Cinema*.¹⁰ Through this journal, Bazin highlighted the many struggles facing French film post-WWII, fighting against governmental control and finding French film's place within the history of film itself. Within this publication, and outside of it, Bazin provided numerous reflections on adaptations, of which Timothy Corrigan highlights three key ideas: "adaptation as transformation, adaptation as digest, and adaptation as refraction."¹¹ In his essay "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest," Bazin says that "it is possible to imagine that we are moving toward a reign of the adaptation in which the notion of the unity of the work of art, if not the very notion of the author himself, will be destroyed."¹² He claims that when adapting a source it is more important to focus on the new product as a distinct object and not fixate on the author's intent. Filmmakers should use the source material to reflect on new ideas and interpretations and not work under the assumption of what the author would want.

Adaptation studies is currently stuck in limbo,. Many major scholars are reluctant to provide a concrete definition of the field, which is a paradoxical issue – how can a field of study exist if it will not define its object of study? While on the surface, the question seems rather self-explanatory – how do you define what is and is not an adaptation? – a closer look highlights the contradictions that plague scholars, leading to the ambiguity the field presently faces. Thomas Leitch addresses this phenomenon in his essay "Adaptation and Intertextuality, or, What isn't an Adaptation and What Does it Matter?":

[Scholars] cite earlier definitions only to take exception to them and generally decline to provide more watertight definitions because they are more concerned to distinguish their accounts of adaptation from errant earlier accounts, as Stam and Cardwell do, than to

¹⁰ Neupart, 42.

¹¹ Corrigan, "Defining Adaptation," 29.

¹² André Bazin, "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest," in *Bazin at Work*, ed. Bert Cardullo, (Routledge, 1997), 40.

distinguish adaptations from the other intertextual modes that most closely resemble them.¹³

Most references to definitions serve only to discredit previous work and do nothing to move the conversation about adaptations forward in any serious manner – as many authors mention definitions only to use them as counter-examples. Leitch then details an argument for nine different definitions of adaptation, nine distinctions between adaptation and intertextuality. Of these nine definitions, it is interesting to note, two would exclude internet-based web-series adaptations from actually being considered adaptations at all. Ironically, Leitch also does not espouse a preferred definition, continuing the apparent tradition of leaving the field undefined. He does conclude with a possible future for the field: define an adaptation by what it is not. The resulting accumulation of disapprovals would impose “new disciplinary constraints”¹⁴ on the field. It is easier to conclude when something definitely is not an adaptation and eventually, with enough work, the accumulation of non-adaptations would result in a semblance of a definition.

In his essay “Revisionist Adaptation: Transtextuality, Cross–Cultural Dialogism, and Performative Infidelities,” Robert Stam looks to redefine how humanities as a whole view transtextuality in an attempt to help adaptation studies specifically. Transtextuality refers to the relationships that exist between different texts or between a text and its contexts.¹⁵ To Stam, the relationships that surround the strict source-to-adaptation interaction are as important as the interaction itself when doing analysis: “adaptations borrow from literature but also draw on all the other arts integral to the cinematic medium, resulting in a multiplication and amplification of intertexts, a stretching of the verbal text in keeping with the rich potentialities of a multi–artistic

¹³ Leitch, “Adaptation and Intertextuality...,” 88–89.

¹⁴ Leitch, “Adaptation and Intertextuality ...,” 103.

¹⁵ Robert Stam, “Revisionist Adaptation: Transtextuality, Cross–Cultural Dialogism, and Performative Infidelities,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, ed. Thomas Leitch, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 240.

medium.”¹⁶ Historically, adaptation studies has been preoccupied with the novel-to-film adaptation, considering the binary relationship of the film back to the novel and how the story changes to fit the new media. Thinking about adaptations as not just a novel-to-film relationship, but rather the relationship between numerous influences and medias allows for the reframing of the definition of adaptation studies: “the concept does carry the theoretical potential of socializing art by recasting it as transindividual and collective, emanating not from the individual artist’s demiurgic brain, but rather from larger networks of socially shared meanings.”¹⁷ Instead of limiting adaptations to just novel and film it is critical to incorporate the entire body of works and influences that contribute to a person’s understanding of a story.

Stam also looked at transtextual subversion, a term that is highly relevant to the works being discussed herein. He defines transtextual subversion as “when a recombinant text challenges the socially retrograde premises of preexisting hypotexts or genres, or calls attention to repressed but potentially subversive features of preexisting texts.”¹⁸ Adaptations have the ability to question and provide commentary on the norms presented in the original text. One of Stam’s examples of transtextual subversion is the *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation *Bride and Prejudice* – a Bollywood interpretation that simultaneously updates the text and highlights similarities between its modern and classic settings. These changes reflect the different era that the source is being transplanted into, whether the story is being modernized or not, because “adaptations become ideological barometers that register the shifts in the social/discursive atmosphere.”¹⁹ Societal growth, and regression, can be presented in the changes made within an

¹⁶ Stam, 242.

¹⁷ Stam, 240.

¹⁸ Stam, 243.

¹⁹ Stam, 247.

adaptation. This growth in the meaning of a narrative through its many recombinations and different adaptations is what is at the heart of adaptation.

Lars Elleström also looks to orient the field of adaptation studies within its greater context. According to Elleström, the context of adaptation studies is a woefully overlooked aspect of the field: “there have only been a few serious attempts to understand in greater detail the nature of the theoretical framework into which adaptation must be placed.”²⁰ He spends his essay “Adaptation within the field of media transformations” addressing where to best situate adaptation – whether it can be considered a form of media transformation and to what extent. While media transformations include many instances that extend beyond adaptation, Elleström says that adaptation can safely be placed within the field, specifically as a form of transmediation. Elleström defines adaptation, within media transformations, as “the transmediation of a specific media product into a new specific media product.”²¹ While he defines adaptation this way, he does acknowledge the issue of what types of media should actually be embraced. With so many new media forms emerging in the digital age, the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable media is getting harder to determine.

Despite the lack of agreement on what adaptation studies is, or should be, one concept unites all adaptation scholars – the rejection of fidelity discourse. David T. Johnson defines fidelity as “the extent to which a given aesthetic object [...] reflects a faithful understanding of its source”²², a base definition about which most scholars tend to agree. Fidelity is one of the most commonly argued concepts by adaptation scholars – it is as much a rite of passage as a

²⁰ Lars Elleström, “Adaptations within the field of media transformations,” ed. Jorgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 114.

²¹ Elleström, 129

²² David T. Johnson, “Adaptation and Fidelity,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, ed. Thomas Leitch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 87.

serious argument. A large percentage of papers outright disapprove of fidelity as a serious topic of consideration. Despite a general consensus that fidelity discourse, and with it a restrictive definition of fidelity, should not have a place in adaptation studies, it is still incorporated into most analyses. Johnson writes that “a true rejection of fidelity will occur [...] when scholars simply neglect to address it at all.”²³ However, he further elaborates on two possible futures of adaptation studies, positing that both ends of the spectrum are viable alternatives for the immediate future of fidelity.

One theory repositions fidelity discourse while the other embraces it. The first theory is that fidelity criticism will transition from an evaluative criticism to a comparative one – an analysis of “cinematic, intertextual, and contextual elements relevant to interpretive arguments emerging from analyses of narrative”²⁴ – instead of basing the worth of the adaptation on its proximity to the original. The term fidelity implies a one-to-one relationship between the original and adapted media, but Johnson suggests that the comparative aspect of fidelity studies needs to be severed from the evaluative aspect so that comparative discourse can find a new life outside of fidelity. Johnson’s second theory embraces the evaluative nature of fidelity-based scholarship. He claims thinking about evaluation while also keeping in mind all the different contexts and models that an adaptation is being influenced by and thinking about them as a “system,”²⁵ will help in getting the most out of adaptation studies. Both possible futures account for an increased acknowledgment of fidelity discourse in adaptation studies, despite each heading in completely different directions.

²³ Johnson, 95.

²⁴ Johnson, 96

²⁵ Johnson, 96–97

André Bazin's work regarding adaptation also touched on fidelity discourse. While a proponent of divorcing authorial intent and adaptation goals, he took a slightly different stance when it came to fidelity. To Bazin, it is not fidelity to form that is important, but fidelity to meaning: "faithfulness to a form, literary or otherwise, is illusory: what matters is the *equivalence in meaning of the forms*."²⁶ Adaptations should not focus on maintaining complete fidelity to an original source but should maintain the same spirit – refracting the original story into a new medium. What is being accomplished by form in the original should be what the adaptation accomplishes, but in its own way. Bazin's concept of fidelity fits with web-series adaptations: maintain the meaning of the original text but not the exact form. In *Pride and Prejudice*, third person narration provides insight into characters' thoughts, so a strict fidelity adaptation would employ a voiceover by an omniscient narrator explaining the events. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* imparts the same information, but it is through transmedia and character dialogue instead, keeping the spirit and meaning but not the form.

An audience's relationship with fidelity, however, is different from an academic's. As Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen state in the introduction to their collection of essays on adaptation studies, audiences have a paradoxical relationship with fidelity: "for the dedicated audience, fidelity to the original source is still vitally important, while at the same time fans contribute to the circular distribution of popular material and new fictions that differ considerably from the source."²⁷ While at the same time being highly concerned with an adaptation remaining true to the source material, fans also create extensions and reimagine the

²⁶ Bazin, 2.

²⁷ Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, "There and Back Again': New challenges and new directions in adaptation studies," in *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. by Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 3.

original narrative of the story. Fans simultaneously extol the need for fidelity to form with the original text, and are at the same time responsible for much of the variety.

As for fidelity's current role in adaptation studies, it is mostly relegated to the background of analysis. In her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon posits there is a spectrum for fidelity and adaptation, and that "adaptation proper" sits in the middle of the spectrum, with translations and transcriptions on one end and spinoffs, sequels, etc. on the other.²⁸ A compulsive emphasis on remaining true to the source text limits creativity, but, as Johnson says keeping near a happy medium that compares but does not evaluate can lead to rich analysis. Fidelity to form, i.e. maintaining dialogue as dialogue or exact recreations of the plot, is still vehemently attacked by the majority of adaptation studies scholars, to the point that is almost redundant. If it were truly unnecessary for adaptation studies, it would have faded out of the literature. Fidelity discourse, like the field as a whole, is in limbo – its future within adaptation studies is yet to be determined.

A recent shift in adaptation studies has led to its current state of flux. In 2004 and 2005 Robert Stam wrote and edited three volumes on adaptation that called for a revolution of sorts in the field. Along with fellow scholar Alessandra Raengo, Stam attempted to reorient adaptation studies as a whole, moving from a focus on fidelity discourse to a focus on intertextuality and recent innovations.²⁹ Thomas Leitch believes that this attempt was largely successful in turning the conversation away from the disavowing of fidelity discourse, but did not establish a concrete definition for the field. Instead, these essays led to an outpouring of new options, a diverse set of possibilities that expended the field in new ways: making the question of 'what is adaptation studies?' much murkier. Bruhn, Gjelsvik, and Hanssen pose five different questions, or

²⁸ Linda Hutcheon, "Final Questions," in *A Theory of Adaptation*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 170.

²⁹ Thomas Leitch, "Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads," *Adaptation* vol 1, issue 1 (2008), 1.

preoccupations, with which adaptation studies is currently grappling: fidelity, expansion beyond novel-to-film relationships, adaptation as multilevel rather than one-to-one, adaptation as a two-way relationship, and applications of global frameworks to the field.³⁰ Instead of defining exactly what adaptation studies is, scholars are focusing on the contexts in which adaptations are studied and expanding the self-imposed restrictions to include a wider variety of media and situations.

The field of adaptation studies is hyper-focused on its own future. Looking to better define key elements specific to the field or to orient the field as a whole within the greater contexts of media and cultural studies, scholars need to maintain adaptation studies' applicability and relevance. They propose possible futures as storytelling continues to evolve with the invention of new technologies and the creation of new stories. With so much discussion regarding what should and should not be considered a part of adaptation studies, a turning point is fast approaching. A broader definition that acknowledges web-series adaptations is critical for the future of the field. Web-series open up a wealth of opportunities for adaptation studies, bringing new perspectives and opportunities that come from the incorporation of this new platform.

³⁰ Bruhn, Gjelsvik, and Hanssen, 4.

iii. Digital Media and the Distinctions from Traditional Media

To fully understand the implications of internet-based adaptations as a new means of storytelling, a foundation in the history of online media and transmedia is necessary. The history of online media is linked with the history of the website YouTube, at least for the majority of mainstream media consumers.³¹ Launched in June of 2005 by three developers, Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim,³² YouTube was one of many sites vying for popularity in the burgeoning age of the internet. The site appeared at the right time to achieve the high level of popularity it has in the current age and has cemented itself as a staple of modern media.

Purchased by Google in October of 2006 for \$1.65 billion, YouTube is the most popular video sharing site, and in the thirteen years since its inception has made a name for itself as a platform for content creation.³³ As of 2019 it is one of the most prominent media platforms, for both scripted and unscripted content. Some, including site creator Jawed Karim, attribute YouTube's rapid rise to prominence to four key elements: recommendations of videos based on viewing history, email links for video sharing, ability to comment on videos, and an embedded video player to play videos on other sites.³⁴ While other sites have or had these features, YouTube was the first to successfully combine them in a user-friendly package. YouTube allowed users to take videos out of the site – share on other websites, send links to friends – and was more tailored to the individual with video recommendations and the algorithm.

One of YouTube's main attractions to content creators is its collaborative nature. Jean Burgess and Joshua Green state in their history of YouTube (as of 2009), that “each of these

³¹ There are many other instances of transmedia productions across the internet, like *Skam*, a popular Norwegian web-series that has spawned seven adaptations in as many countries, that weaves across numerous media platforms and video clips to tell the story of a group of teenagers everyday life (<https://tv.nrk.no/serie/skam>).

³² Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 1.

³³ Burgess and Green, 5.

³⁴ Burgess and Green, 2.

participants [creators, audience members, corporations, etc.] approaches YouTube with their own purposes and aims and collectively shape YouTube as a dynamic cultural system: YouTube is a site of participatory culture.”³⁵ YouTube was the next in a long line of media innovations, following on the heels of the inventions of film and television. YouTube heralded the arrival of immediate, free, and highly interactive media, allowing for the direct interaction of creators and viewers on a level not possible with previous media.³⁶ In recent years, the accessibility and authenticity of creators on YouTube has spread to the rest of the internet with the rise of social media. Audiences are more likely to watch a film or television show if they feel a personal connection with the actors or creators, creating incentive to populate social media sites. This shift began with the arrival of YouTube – media became easier to find and more relatable. Burgess and Green summarize the importance of YouTube quite well, saying that “YouTube represents not so much the collision as the co-evolution and uneasy co-existence of ‘old’ and ‘new’ media industries, forms, and practices.”³⁷ YouTube, when it was first developed, was the “wild west” of media production: there were no rules, no regulations, and individuals with their cameras determined what was being published on the site.³⁸ The initial design of the platform allowed for both its popularity and its place within the innovation of internet media.

YouTube quickly evolved in ways that even its creators could not have predicted. Experimental forms of media appeared on the platform, thanks to its lack of regulations and the openness of its viewership – anyone could find and watch posted videos. One of the most well-

³⁵ Burgess and Green, vii.

³⁶ YouTube is, first and foremost, a business run on advertising - as a platform its main, and only, goal is to make as much money as possible. Zeynep Tufekci addresses this in her TED talk, “We’re building a dystopia just to make people click on ads,” addressing how digital platforms sell information to create targeted ads in unprecedented ways. However, for this analysis I am choosing to not highlight these issues as they were not as prevalent when these web-series were produced.

³⁷ Burgess and Green, 14.

³⁸ Aymar Jean Christian, “The Web as Television Reimagined? Online Networks and the Pursuit of Legacy Media,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* vol 36, issue 4 (2012), 341.

known experiments was the initial idea for the VlogBrothers channel, created by John and Hank Green. The entire purpose of their channel was communication, they would only communicate via video blogs for one entire calendar year – no texting, emailing, instant messaging from January 1st of 2007 until January 1st of 2008.³⁹ Inspired by daily video bloggers like Zefrank and Lonelygirl15, the brothers documented their day to day lives. Using the video sharing platform as a means of communication was a revolutionary concept, taking a platform previously used for one specific function and giving it a new purpose. This idea of experimentation and innovation inspired later creators on YouTube, encouraging an area where innovation was celebrated and rewarded. Creating content that was different from current main stream media was what viewers watched and what succeeded. As Amyar Christian stated, it was “a transition from mass audiences and scarce programming to niche audiences and available programming.”⁴⁰ In contrast with traditional media, YouTube provides audiences with the ability to find content truly specific to their interests due to the vast quantity of material that continues to appear on the site.

The development of an open internet focused on new entertainment led to the rise of transmedia as a mode of storytelling. No longer are people satisfied with a single-layer movie or television series to entertain them, they increasingly expect stories to engage with them on multiple levels.⁴¹ As Kristen Daly says in her essay *Cinema 3.0*, the essence of media itself has changed: “For Cinema 3.0, a movie no longer exists as a cohesive, unchanging art piece but instead participates in a world of cross-media interaction, and this has enabled new forms of narrative requiring, as part of the enjoyment, interaction in the form of user-participation and

³⁹ *Vlogbrothers*, “Brotherhood 2.0: January 1st,” aired January 1, 2007.

⁴⁰ Christian, 342.

⁴¹ Transmedia is not limited to just internet-based media, traditional film and television are increasingly attempting transmedia aspects of their narratives, like the television show *Wynonna Earp*. In between seasons of the show there were interactive stories on twitter and the phone app YARN which established storylines for the upcoming season before it aired.

interpretation”⁴². Media represents the world that creates it, and the defining trait of our current society is the influence of the digital world and the amount of content available in each moment. With this increase in varied stimuli, people crave novelty – they want content that appeals to them in new and different ways. Society is constantly inundated with new information and new stimuli, so presenting a story across multiple platforms satisfies people’s desire to assimilate knowledge in a way that reflects how they currently live their lives.

Transmedia as a concept, however, has been difficult to define, despite its rising popularity. What truly qualifies as a transmedia story differs depending on the origin of the definition. For example, the Producers Guild of America has a more technical definition of transmedia, requiring a minimum of three narrative storylines to exist on separate platforms (within the same universe) for a production to be considered transmedia.⁴³ This definition, however, was written with more traditional media in mind, like television or films, not internet-based media. In his book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, Henry Jenkins defines transmedia more broadly as “stories that unfold across multiple media platforms, with each media making distinctive contributions to our understanding of the world, a more integrated approach to franchise development than models based on urtexts and ancillary products.”⁴⁴ The distinction between transmedia and other media interactions, like a film remade into a television series, is that transmedia storytelling gives the viewer added information

⁴² Kristen Daly, “Cinema 3.0: The Interactive Image,” *Cinema Journal* vol 50, no.1 (2010), 82.

⁴³ “The Guild defines a Transmedia Narrative project or franchise of one that consists of three (or more) narrative storylines existing within the same fictional universe on any of the following platforms: Film, Television, Short Film, Broadband, Publishing, Comics, Animation, Mobile, Special Venues, DVD/Blu-ray/CD-ROM, Narrative Commercial and Marketing rollouts, and other technologies that may or may not currently exist. These narrative extensions are NOT the same as repurposing material from one platform to be cut or repurposed to different platforms” (<https://www.producersguild.org/news/news.asp?id=39637&hhSearchTerms=%22transmedia%22>)

⁴⁴ Henry Jenkins, introduction to *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. (New York: New York University, 2006), 21.

Urtexts: the original iteration of a text that all following versions can be compared to. Usually used in reference to Biblical texts, the term has been adopted by adaptation studies to refer to the original, source texts.

through medias that can stand alone. Jenkins further elaborates what is and is not transmedia in his blog post, “Transmedia Storytelling 101.” Instead of one concrete definition, Jenkins provides a list of characteristics most transmedia projects have in common, what unites them and makes them unique from other media endeavors. This allows for the wide variety found within internet-based media. The emphasis with this ‘definition’ is that “transmedia storytelling is the ideal aesthetic form for an era of collective intelligence.”⁴⁵ Jenkins discusses how transmedia reflects the way society is focused on collecting and sharing information. The main emphasis is still on the “integral elements [being] dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels,”⁴⁶ but Jenkins also highlights other aspects that are common across transmedia programs. The stories are not typically focused on a single character or plot, but on “fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories.”⁴⁷ Interestingly, when defining transmedia, there seems to be a need to separate it from adaptations entirely, as Melanie Schiller does at the beginning of her work on transmedia: “For a further understanding of these new practices of storytelling across media, it is important to distinguish between media adaptations or remediations – like the film version of a novel – and transmedia storytelling in a stricter sense.”⁴⁸ There is a lack of acknowledgment by transmedia scholars of the combination of transmedia and ‘remediations’ – they can exist in the same media. Adaptations are a perfect fit for transmedia storytelling, especially right now as transmedia is developing. Adaptations were the narrative of choice at the beginning of traditional film – acclimate your audience to a new

⁴⁵ Jenkins, Henry. “Transmedia Storytelling 101.” *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, 21 Mar. 2007, henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html, paragraph 8.

⁴⁶ Jenkins, “Transmedia Storytelling 101,” paragraph 1.

⁴⁷ Jenkins, “Transmedia Storytelling 101,” paragraph 3.

⁴⁸ Melanie Schiller, “Transmedia Storytelling: New Practices and Audiences,” *Stories*. ed. Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever, (Amsterdam University Press: 2018), 99

medium through a familiar story. Doing the same thing here allows for audiences to pick up the nuances of the new medium while still having a strong grasp on the story being told.

Defining transmedia this way does come with some opposition. Much like transtextuality, there is a debate over how to define the term and where to draw the line. Regina Schober claims that thinking about transmediality in terms of distinct ‘medias’ is not conducive to the direction in which the field is moving. She claims that calling something “transmedia” draws attention to the boundaries between medias instead of bringing them together. She would rather allow for fluidity between medias to increase, to the point that there is no need to distinguish between one medium and another because they are used together consistently. The contexts in which the distinct medias are used is more important than the actual differences between the medias: adaptation rely on the “intermedial, cultural, and perceptual”⁴⁹ contexts that arise from the interactions between medias. However, in this moment I believe that it is important to distinguish the separate medias being used in a transmedia project so as to emphasize the departure from previous storytelling means. Once transmedia as a form is more established and not on the fringes of media styles, it may be better to have a more fluid definition for transmedia, but in this moment a more rigid definition is necessary.

⁴⁹ Schober, 91

iv. Overview of Web-Series

With the increasing accessibility of the internet since the '90s, there has been a shift from television towards the internet as a new frontier. Initial content conformed to the practices of television, not by regulations but by imagination.⁵⁰ While YouTube as a site revolutionized online content creation, the concept of the web-series was not new. One of the first media forms on the internet were internet soap operas, dramatized mini versions of the shows airing on cable television.⁵¹ The first web-series mimicked television in their format, and it was not until vlogging and more independent video creation took off that web-series formats began to vary. Three main characteristics make these web-series inherently distinct from traditional media: audience participation/interaction, modernization as a foundation, and transmedia as a function of the story.

Henry Jenkins, in addition to being at the forefront of transmedia studies, is also a key figure in studying participatory culture. Jenkins describes participatory culture as “a world where everyone participates, where we take media into our own hands, where we have the capacity, often, to produce media, share media.”⁵² While traditional media maintains a wall between the official creators and fan creators, web-series have embraced the participatory culture that inevitably occurs around a piece of media in this technology-saturated age. Instead of ignoring or shunning fan interactions, be it comments or questions on plot, fan art, fan fiction, etc., these series incorporate the fans into key aspects of the narrative and the experience. Characters in these web-series adaptations directly communicate with the audience through both the videos

⁵⁰ Christian, 340

⁵¹ Sheila Murphy, “From Tube to a ‘Series of Tubes’” Television in an as New Media,” *How Television Invented New Media*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 94.

⁵² Henry Jenkins, Edutopia, “Henry Jenkins on Participatory Culture,” posted May 7, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gPm-c1wRsQ>

and through sites being used as transmedia for the story – i.e. answering questions left in the comments of YouTube videos or replying to people’s tweets on Twitter. This level of character accessibility sets these web-series apart from traditional media and keeps them in line more with the vlogger lifestyle of many internet personalities.

Since these web-series are built upon the premise that the main character is posting videos about their life to the internet, modernization is essential to the success of the story. For the story to make sense, the characters and events must be brought forward to the twenty-first-century. Professions that are no longer available, ideologies that are no longer acceptable, and circumstances that no longer arise must be changed. This relates back to Robert Stam’s idea of transtextual subversion: moving texts into new circumstances either unearths repressed subversive ideas or creates subversive ideas about the original concepts in the source text. Therefore, commentary on the nineteenth-century must become commentary on the twenty-first-century while still staying true to the meaning of the text.

As defined earlier, transmedia is a large part of what makes this type of web-series adaptation differ from other adaptations. These characters and their stories exist outside of the main web-series – they give a richness to the story that cannot be achieved through traditional media. The idea of transmediality is intrinsically linked with web-series adaptations – to get the complete story, viewers must watch, read, and follow. Within these adaptations the transmedia typically remains within the online world – the characters maintain individual social media sites to offer insight into or advance the plot outside the main videos. YouTube and Twitter are most commonly used as the core of the stories, where the majority of the plot is advanced, while the other sites, like Pinterest, Lookbook, Instagram, Thisismyjam, etc, further character development, allowing the minor characters a place to develop outside of the core videos. The

transmediality also mediates a larger percentage of the audience interaction and participation, as Marie-Laure Ryan says: “transmedia storytelling presents its worlds as collective creations that erase the distinction between spontaneous fan contributions and the content produced by the professionals of the entertainment industry.”⁵³ What ordinarily would be considered fan content or theories is incorporated into the network that makes up the overall story and blurs the line between fan and professional.

Web-series allow for attention to narrative structure in ways that previous adaptations were denied due to limitations of the chosen forms. *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre* were originally written in two distinct styles – third person omniscient narrator with a shifting limited perspective and first-person perspective,⁵⁴ respectively. Both web-based adaptations – *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* – use aspects of web-series to maintain a sense of cohesion between the original narrative style and the adaptation. Nuances in meaning that get lost when adapting can be brought to these web-series adaptations with the attention paid to narrative structure. As Allegra Tepper says in her analysis of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the web-series “manages to modernize the source text while staying astonishingly close to the narrative structure of Austen’s novel.”⁵⁵ Single instance traditional media (i.e. film, television, mini-series, etc.) is much more rigid in its techniques and conventions and any innovation that occurs in them remains within the traditional conventions. With internet-based media and web-series, despite existing for over a decade, there are few rules established. Creators remain free to

⁵³Marie-Laure Ryan, “Transmedia Storytelling as Narrative Practice,” In *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, ed. Thomas Leitch, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 53.

⁵⁴ Third person shifting limited: an outside narrator tells the story with a focus on one character’s internal life. Shifting refers to brief dips into other character’s minds to see their viewpoints on some events. First person: the main character is the narrator and the story is told through their eyes, with their biases and ignorance being the same as the narrators.

⁵⁵ Allegra Tepper, “Lizzie in Real Life: Social and Narrative Immersion Through Transmedia in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*,” *Film Matters*, vol. 6 no 1, 45–46.

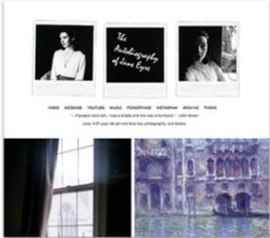
experiment, allowing for a style able to maintain a sense of narrative integrity across medias.

These adaptations can keep a closer attention to the meaning that is conveyed through specific narrative structure choices and use the innovations to access this meaning in new ways.

Unfortunately, the reliance on transmedia also has its faults. The format of social media and the internet in general makes it difficult to view and analyze in retrospect. Transmedia is highly dependent on first-hand experience, and while *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* was proactive and kept a log of transmedia interactions between characters, *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* was not as thorough. While there is a record of the sites that were used throughout the run of *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, most of the links are currently inactive.⁵⁶ It requires more dedication and persistence to find the accounts, which a casual fan might not do when viewing the series for the first time in 2019 rather than 2013.

Transmedia

We update all transmedia sites daily and release more ways to dive deep into the story of Jane Eyre as it develops.



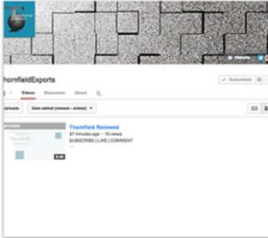
Jane posts her story on [YouTube](#).

Jane keeps in touch on [Twitter](#).

Jane also post frequently on her [Instagram](#).

Jane also posts it on [Tumblr](#) where you can get a more intimate look at the inner workings of Jane.

Adele on [Twitter](#).



Grace Poole runs Rochester's Aluminium company Thornfield Exports.


Grace runs the [Thornfield Website](#).

Grace updates the companies [Pinterest](#).

Grace runs the [Thornfield Twitter](#).

Grace runs the [Thornfield YouTube](#).

E.D. Rochester on [Twitter](#).



You can also find:

Blanche on [Twitter](#).

Blanche's [Website](#).

Johanna on [Pinterest](#).

Liz on [8Tracks](#).

Diana on [Twitter](#).

Mary on [Twitter](#).

⁵⁶ "Transmedia," *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, accessed 3 December 2018, <http://theautobiographyofja.wixsite.com/jane-eyre/transmedia>.

For the five year anniversary of the original videos, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* reposted all the different aspects of the show on their Facebook page⁵⁷ in an attempt to regain the magic of the original posting. With the importance of time-dependent viewing, web-series adaptations are technology dependent yet harken back to classical entertainment forms like live theater.

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries was the foundation from which this genre of adaptations grew, but each subsequent adaptation makes the format its own – no two literary adaptations on the internet use the same combination of transmedia sites or film in exactly the same style. Much like other forms of media, there are general connections between all iterations that bring the collective together, but then the individual creators apply their personal styles and visions to the basic structure. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* are examples of two different ends of the production spectrum, a professional shoot and a zero-budget production, and they also demonstrate the different ways in which these adaptations can use the technologies and formats available to them.

⁵⁷ “The Lizzie Bennet Diaries,” Facebook, accessed 3 December 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/LizzieBennetDiaries/>.

v. *Pride and Prejudice and The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen is one of the most well loved novels of all time. Not surprisingly, its web-series adaptation is extremely popular as well. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* was the first web-series adaptation of a classic novel posted to YouTube. Produced by Bernie Su and Hank Green, the show initially made and rereleased eight episodes before it was necessary to get a sponsor or enough views to pay for the production. Instead of being produced like a traditional television show or film, with studio backing and a budget, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* was filmed with the understanding that Su and Green would need viewers and a fanbase before they could continue making the show. It premiered on April 9, 2012 with new episodes posted twice weekly until the final episode on March 28, 2013. That is just the content posted on the main channel: with 100 main videos, Q & A videos, and videos posted by other characters on their channels, there are 160 videos in total telling the story of Lizzie Bennet and her friends/family. This totals nearly ten hours of video content, even though the average video is less than four minutes. Compared to other recent adaptations, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* provided up to 400% more content in total over the course of the year than most traditional adaptations.⁵⁸ Combining the videos with the numerous transmedia sites the story uses expands the world of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* even further, creating a totally immersive story.

Before establishing the key characteristics of the web-series, it is necessary to understand the key traits of the work being adapted. *Pride and Prejudice* is narrated in the third person with a shifting limited perspective. The majority of the text focuses on Elizabeth, but occasionally gives insight into the thoughts of other characters. This shifting allows for some dramatic irony – the readers know more about a given situation than the main characters. However, instead of

⁵⁸ *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) has a run time of 2 hr 9 min, *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) 5 hr 27 min,

using this shifting limited perspective to expand on the main plot, it is primarily used to enhance feelings about minor characters and is forgone in instances where questions regarding the plot could be alleviated. These moments of introspection happen with most characters yet are not necessarily to advance the plot: “Mr. Darcy [...] had looked at her only to criticise. But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, then he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes.”⁵⁹ The reader has peeked into Darcy’s mind and gains a greater sense of the scene through that knowledge.

However, Austen avoids this shift into other characters’ perspectives when hearing their thoughts would negatively impact the overall story arc. This is most noticeable in the Darcy versus Wickham subplot – hearing either of their thoughts would make it clear whether Wickham is honest in his declarations and whether Darcy is as malintentioned as presented. This allows the reader to remain as unaware as Elizabeth: “she paused, and saw with no slight indignation that [Darcy] was listening with an air which proved him wholly unmoved by any feeling of remorse.”⁶⁰ The reader is shown only how Elizabeth perceives the situation instead of Darcy’s true reaction. The story proceeds with heightened mystery as to who is truly at fault. There are also instances when the reader is denied full knowledge of a situation, such as when Darcy and Wickham first see each other in Meryton: “[...] Elizabeth happening to see the countenance of both as they looked at each other, was all astonishment at the effect of the meeting. Both changed colours, one looked white, the other red.”⁶¹ The reader is within Elizabeth’s perspective but still not privy to the entirety of her experience. The reactions are

⁵⁹ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice: an authoritative text, backgrounds and sources, criticism, 3rd edition*, ed. Donald Gray (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 16.

⁶⁰ Austen, 126.

⁶¹ Austen, 50.

never attributed to either man, since that knowledge would likely have given the reader too much insight into who was truly in the right and in the wrong. Austen uses the shifting perspective within her novel to accentuate the feelings of realism and connection to the characters instead of using it for plot purposes – there is no real reason for the switches between character perspectives.

Throughout the novel the reader is allowed access to Elizabeth's intimate thoughts in a more unfiltered manner with the use of free indirect discourse. Free indirect discourse refers to narration that is implied to be the thought of a character but not explicitly referred to as such.⁶² Elizabeth's internal monologue is usually written in a tagged manner: there is a 'she said' or 'she thought' attached to the thoughts. Sometimes, however, the narration slips from third person omniscient to Elizabeth's first-person thoughts with no indication. There is a sense of being one with Elizabeth during these moments, even if the story is narrated by some third party, as when Elizabeth meets Darcy while visiting Pemberley: "Her coming there was the most unfortunate, the most ill-judged thing in the world! How strange must it appear to him in what a disgraceful light might it not strike so vain a man! It might seem as if she had purposely thrown herself in his way again! Oh why did she come?"⁶³ There are no indications that this is coming from Elizabeth, there are no tags to distinguish it from the regular narration, but it is distinctly in her voice, and this allows for the reader to connect on a deeper level. By inserting the reader directly into Elizabeth's mind, Austen gives Elizabeth the most focus of any character – the reader has moderate access to the thoughts of other characters but not in such an unmediated manner as

⁶² Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, (London: Cornell University, 1978), 197–198.

⁶³ Austen, 163

with Elizabeth. The free indirect nature of Elizabeth's thoughts allows her to remain the singular main character without deviating from the third person narration which characterizes the novel.

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries plays with the structure of the original novel in its videos and its transmedia aspects. There is a need to alter the narrative style across the medias, as the web-series are inherently first person and have a perspective limited to a single character. Quotes that were attributed to the omniscient third-person narrator in the original text must be presented by a character in some manner, since there is no mediation between the audience and the characters. For example, the iconic opening line of the novel, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife,"⁶⁴ becomes a t-shirt gifted to Lizzie by her mother.



This playful acknowledgement of the source material gives credit to Austen's original story, but immediately announces to the viewer that this adaptation is not going to strictly follow the source material – the creators are making it their own to fit into the modern time period.

⁶⁴ Austen, 1.

While the original narration was in the third person, there was a focus on Elizabeth Bennet – for the majority of the narrative, information and perspective are limited to what Elizabeth knows and sees. In multiple episodes characters other than Lizzie attempt to interject with their versions of the events to counter Lizzie’s prejudiced point of view. Charlotte and Jane even go so far as to hijack the videos entirely at the beginning of the series:

Charlotte: We feel that Lizzie isn’t being particularly ... comprehensive with her commentary regarding recent events.

Jane: Well it is her video blog.

Charlotte: But don’t you think her last video was a bit inaccurate?

Jane: Lizzie sees what Lizzie sees.⁶⁵

Other characters provide their own opinions in the videos, but they are ultimately Lizzie’s videos, showing her version of the truth. Charlotte Lu in essence acts as a democratizing force, editing the videos to draw attention to Lizzie’s inherently biased storytelling. Silke Jandl says that “all content that is uploaded to YouTube necessarily becomes externalized and leaves it up to the viewers to assess its reliability.”⁶⁶ Unreliable narration is common in literature, but with transmedia the viewer is able to investigate further to determine whether they are being deceived. There are multiple other aspects of the story that help to convey this bias that many adaptations ignore:

Most interpretations assume that Lizzie is always right, and conflate her point of view with Austen’s point of view. But the omniscient narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* has a sly voice, and is just as judgmental of Lizzie as Lizzie is of everyone else. A transmedia take

⁶⁵ *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Episode 15, “Lizzie Bennet is in Denial,” directed by Bernie Su, aired May 28, 2012.

⁶⁶ Silke Jandl, “The Lizzie Bennet Diaries: Adapting Jane Austen in the Internet Age,” *AAA: Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, vol. 40, no. ½ (2015), 179.

on the material opened the story and allowed other perspectives to inform the storyworld.⁶⁷

Austen's narrator gives the reader a different perspective than what Elizabeth believes, commenting on the plot when she is in the wrong. In lieu of a narrator to show when Lizzie is in error, the viewer must rely on the other characters to fact check the story, either within the videos or through the transmedia.

The release of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* coincided with the rise of social media sites like Twitter, Pinterest, and Tumblr, giving the characters multiple places to easily exist as entities outside of the original videos. The transmedia aspects, specifically the characters' Twitter accounts, serve as the web-series acknowledgment of the novel's shifting limited perspective – it allows the audience to access characters' thoughts in a way not entirely possible in a video. Characters such as Darcy, Caroline, or Gigi, who do not appear often in Lizzie's videos, become accessible in a more intimate manner. In the novel, Darcy's feelings for Elizabeth are made plain to the reader early on, but to the viewers who only watch the core videos, Darcy presents only as Lizzie describes him. Despite being an essential character, Darcy does not actually appear in person in Lizzie's videos until Episode 59, more than halfway through the series.⁶⁸ However, his Twitter account was active for the entirety of the series, interacting with Bing Lee, Caroline, Gigi Darcy, etc., giving dedicated viewers a look into his thoughts. Five tweets were published by Darcy's character between November 2nd and 3rd, 2012, expounding upon his emotional state after confessing his feelings to Lizzie, corresponding to the time between Lizzie's video posts.

⁶⁷ Tepper, 49.

⁶⁸ *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Episode 59, "Staff Spirit," directed by Bernie Su, originally aired October 29, 2012.

These tweets serve to replace the shifting limited perspective while creating fully-fledged characters that could be seen as ‘real’ people, maintaining the meaning of the source text over its form.



The tweets also advance the plot when events are not captured on camera, as seen in Bing’s tweets during and after the wedding, which add to Lizzie’s description of her first meeting with Darcy and company. Bing tweets about Darcy’s anti-social behavior, Lizzie and Darcy’s awkward dance, and his blossoming infatuation with Jane.⁶⁹



⁶⁹ “Bing Lee,” Apr 21–22, 2012, https://twitter.com/bingliest/with_replies

Since Lizzie's camera never goes out with her, staying set up in a room wherever she is staying, much of the story happens off-camera and the other characters' social medias provide a window into the missing action.

As with Darcy, his little sister Gigi is first introduced through transmedia. In the main media, she does not appear until episode 77 but has an active presence on social media much earlier. Gigi is first introduced via her Twitter interactions with her brother, and her music and movie preferences help develop her character. Gigi's first appearance in the videos comes nine months after her first tweet – fans actively engaged with the transmedia know her before she ever introduces herself to Lizzie.⁷⁰ Gigi's initial tweets and social media activity establish her emotional state, which is later explained by the revelation of her ill-fated relationship with Wickham.⁷¹ This level of foreshadowing is not possible in traditional media – there is just not enough time in a contained film or show to dedicate space to introducing minor characters at the beginning of the story if they do not pertain to the main plot until the end. Gigi's involvement in the narrative is also an example of plot alterations made for the web-series: in the novel, Georgiana Darcy is mentioned infrequently and only when it serves to move the plot forward. In *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* she becomes a full-developed character with her own personality and agency outside of the men in her life. In the original novel, Georgiana exists only as an example of Wickham's poor character and is never developed past a plot device, but the web-series has the ability to fully develop Gigi before she enters the story.

One aspect almost entirely unique to web-series is the direct interaction the characters have with the audience. Characters talk back to audiences in a way that never happens in

⁷⁰ *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, episode 77, "Tour Leader," directed by Bernie Su, originally aired January 7, 2013.

⁷¹ Gigi's first tweets all pertain to what she is watching (*The Notebook*, *Moulin Rouge*) or listening to (*Song for the Dumped* by Ben Folds or *Goodnight and Go* by Imogen Heap), which all deal with themes of heartbreak, unhealthy relationships, and unhappy endings (<https://twitter.com/ggdarcy>)

traditional media. Lizzie is speaking directly to whomever is watching the videos, who become companions on her journey. The connection is most apparent in the ten Q&A videos, when Lizzie answers questions left by actual viewers, sometimes commenting on the constructed nature of the plot: “Don’t you think your mother’s focus on a husband is at least the littlest bit sexist?”⁷² The audience members are able to ask questions about the plot and create little storylines that would not have originally appeared in the videos if they had not interacted with the content in this way. Social media sites are open to the public, so anyone could interact with the characters and with the plot. The cast and crew were able to reply to messages and create lives for these characters outside of the main storyline, expanding this fictional world with life-like characters. Audience participation enters into the main story videos as well, as seen when Lizzie announces she is working on her thesis at Pemberley Digital. The audience, knowing this is Darcy’s company from the characters’ different social media accounts, feels the need to ‘tell’ Lizzie: “Yeah. Charlotte and all of the internet filled me in on that little factoid about five seconds after my last video ended.”⁷³ The audience was able to impact the plot – their input was not ignored, even in creating the core content.

For *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, a large percentage of the plot takes place off camera and is conveyed to the audience by Lizzie – the audience has to trust her interpretation of events or look to the transmedia for verification of Lizzie’s interpretations. The main method the series employs to visualize these offscreen events is costume theater. Characters who are aware of the video-blog recreate pertinent events, like Jane and Lizzie’s recreation of Darcy and Wickham’s unexpected meeting in town.⁷⁴

⁷² *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, episode 8, “Charlotte’s Back!” directed by Bernie Su, originally aired May 3, 2012.

⁷³ *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, episode 77, “Tour Leader,” directed by Bernie Su, originally aired January 7, 2013.

⁷⁴ *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, episode 44, “Darcy Wickham Drama,” directed by Bernie Su, aired Sep 6, 2012.



At this moment in the plot, neither Darcy nor Wickham know of the videos, so Jane and Lizzie recreate the events to the best of their ability. In the novel, this moment is observed through Elizabeth's perspective, with no omniscient narrator to add input, much as the audience must trust Lizzie and Jane's recreation of the events. While these recreations are factually accurate, the events that Lizzie chooses to depict also show her bias – only what she deems necessary is incorporated.

All web-series, in their opening scenes, must address the necessity of modernizing the plot of the novel while keeping the narrative recognizable as a version of the original. *Pride and Prejudice* is well suited to this type of modernization as the plot is largely character dependent rather than fixed to a specific time period. Silke Jandl claims that “[*Pride and Prejudice*] deals with one of the most fundamental aspects of social interaction and human nature, rendering it almost universally accessible.”⁷⁵ This is why it was a logical choice to adapt for the internet and why it was so immediately accepted by audiences. The plot had very few events that anchor it to the time period in which it was written: the formality surrounding marriage proposals, militia men, and the elopement scandal. Some of these were easy modifications, job offers instead of

⁷⁵ Jandl, 171.

marriage proposals, swim teams instead of militias; however Lydia's storyline was a major hurdle.

In a modern setting, elopements and sex before marriage do not generate the level of drama as in the 19th century. When Jane informs Elizabeth of Lydia's predicament, the modern audience does not have the same visceral reaction as a reader when the original novel was published: "What I have to say relates to poor Lydia. An express came at twelve last night, just as we were all gone to bed, from Colonel Forester, to inform us that she was gone off with one of his officers; to owe the truth, with Wickham!"⁷⁶ A young, unmarried woman going off alone with a man in that time period would convey a sense of scandal and drama that is absent in the modern age. Women are no longer chaperoned for the entirety of their unmarried lives and elopements are no longer a thing of shame, so that plot loses its force. The web-series solves this issue by changing the entire nature of Lydia's troubles. Instead of an elopement scandal, Lydia is embroiled in a sextape scandal: "Apparently [George] set up a website asking for subscriptions to a sextape with 'YouTube Star Lydia Bennet.'"⁷⁷ This is an interesting plot choice, as it alters the perception of Lydia's character quite drastically, in a way that reflects the society we live in now. Women are given much more agency over their own lives, their stories, so an elopement just isn't scandalous today. However, the sextape story line creates a similar level of controversy as the original plot. Changing that one element is key to making Lydia a sympathetic victim instead of a thoughtless girl who deserved her impending life of misery.

The direct interaction of audience with story and the modernization elements come together with the alterations in Lydia's storyline – if it weren't for audience reactions the story would have proceeded much differently. Creator Hank Green attributes Lydia's role completely

⁷⁶ Austen, 177

⁷⁷ *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, episode 84, "Ugh," directed by Bernie Su, aired Jan 23, 2013.

to audience reaction.⁷⁸ He goes further to say that “[he] was surprised that people took to Lydia so quickly. It really changed how we saw the character and what we wanted to do with her”⁷⁹ – something that doesn’t normally happen in traditional media. Audience input typically does not extend past early screenings, where creators are asking for input; with internet-based media, the input is constant and without invitation. This heightened interaction helped the audience connect with Lydia on a level that no one was expecting. Lydia becomes a relatable individual beyond her relationship to her sisters and Wickham before her misfortune, allowing the viewers to feel compassion for her.

These innovations help give a new life to the classic text, both in terms of audience and in terms of production, while still maintaining an intense connection with the original narrative. This web-series brings the classic narrative to a modern audience in a way prior adaptations could not: deeper connections between audience and character, extensions of the narrative into aspects of people’s everyday life, and altered plot elements into relatable experiences all help to turn *Pride and Prejudice* into *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. A full analysis of this web-series leans heavily on transmedia and the specific instance of internet culture rather than traditional media studies. Fidelity to meaning is instituted through equivalences in storyline between the two time periods and the attention to the nuances of narrative structure – aspects are changed to better convey the meaning that was originally intended. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* paved the way for internet-based, web-series format adaptations; if it had been unsuccessful the rest of the genre might never have come to be.

⁷⁸ Hank Green, “I am Hank Green, co-creator, executive producer, and occasional writer for The Lizzie Bennet Diaries,” *Reddit*, accessed February 12, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/LizzieBennet/comments/13rx7y/i_am_hank_green_cocreator_executive_producer_and/

⁷⁹ Green, “I am Hank Green, co-creator, executive producer, and occasional writer for The Lizzie Bennet Diaries”

vi. *Jane Eyre and The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*

After the success of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, there was a wave of adaptations following the popularity of the original. *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, published from February 28, 2013 until June 21, 2014, followed right on the heels of *LBD*'s popularity, giving *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë the web-series treatment. With the blessing of Bernie Su, this production was created with a zero-dollar budget by a group of "students and professionals in various fields who are looking to enter the entertainment industry,"⁸⁰ giving it a much more authentic look than *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. Comparing Lizzie and Jane's first videos, Jane's videos line up with real vloggers initial content while Lizzie's are much more professional. So whereas Lizzie feels real because of the acting and authenticity of the writing, *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* immediately comes across as authentic due to the low budget filming and camera quality – Jane feels like a woman who just decided one day to start vlogging. There has been little to no scholarly work done on these subsequent adaptations: most analysis remains focused on *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. With the growing number of web-series adaptations, it is important to compare and contrast how they tell their story to come to a conclusion as to better situate them within the field of adaptation studies.

The Autobiography of Jane Eyre is an interesting combination of low-budget production and plot manipulations to bring the story to life as a web-series. When thinking of adapting a text for a web-series, *Jane Eyre* does not initially seem like a good fit – it's a gothic, a romance, a bildungsroman⁸¹ with elements of mystery which do not condense easily into four-minute videos. However, *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* is successful, despite facing unforeseen

⁸⁰ "Frequently Asked Questions," *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, accessed 18 January 2019, <https://theautobiographyofja.wixsite.com/jane-eyre/faq>

⁸¹ "A novel that has as its main theme the formative years or spiritual education of one person" (OED)

casting issues.⁸² As with *LBD*, liberties are taken with plot to maintain the structure necessary for the format, while keeping the spirit of the original novel. *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* establishes immediately that it is inspired by *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, by showing a clip from the show as a defining element of the initial episode.



Within the world of *AoJE*, Jane as a character is inspired by Lizzie as well. To her, Lizzie is a young woman documenting her life, which gives Jane the idea to start her own video blog, even referring to Lizzie as a real person over the course of her videos: “Lizzie always had trouble with endings, but this beginning stuff is way harder.”⁸³ Doing so establishes a universe that connects Jane Eyre and Elizabeth Bennet in a new and contextually dependent way – this type of connection could not be possible with other adaptation formats. While aligning Jane with Lizzie, it clearly indicates that *AoJE* will not follow the same path as *LBD*. In contrast to the defining elements of *LBD* previously discussed in detail, *AoJE* uses a handheld camera, voiceovers, and a focus on the surrounding world rather than Jane herself.

⁸² Actor Adam J. Wright (Rochester) left the production before filming wrapped and was replaced with Eric Bruce for the final episode, leaving a rushed and disappointing ending.

⁸³ *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, episode 2, “Beginnings,” directed by Nessa Aref, aired April 3, 2013.

The Autobiography of Jane Eyre is a bridge between the styles of traditional film making and web-series, combining both direct interaction with ‘found’ footage and incidental recordings. One of the limitations of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is its camera set up and the single point of view: characters have to relate to the camera all of the actions instead of first hand viewer experience. *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* bypasses this, filming in multiple locations and recording events as they happen instead of relegating all the action to off camera. Some of these moments feel contrived and require a suspension of disbelief for the sake of the story, such as when Adele Rochester steals Jane’s camera and happens to catch a conversation between Rochester and Jane or when Jane accidentally leaves the camera on during her interview with Mr. Rochester.⁸⁴



These manipulations are, however, necessary to allow the audience to experience events first-hand in addition to individual character narration. Since these questionable videos are necessary to advance the plot, the audience must allow the creators some moral flexibility when telling the story.

⁸⁴ *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, episode 12, “Dinner,” directed Nessa Aref, aired June 19, 2013.

Jane Eyre is told from the point of view of the titular character. The novel is her reflections on her life and what happened to her throughout it. With this first-person narration style, there are some limitations that the novel works around. Since Jane is a character and the narrator, there are things that she might not know and is therefore unable to relate to the reader – everything presented is filtered through Jane and her personal biases. The distinction between Narrator Jane and Character Jane is made most clear when Narrator Jane alludes to something that happens later or gives the reader a piece of information that Character Jane has not yet learned. When Jane leaves Thornfield, Narrator Jane interjects with her current feelings about the experience: “Reader, it is not pleasant to dwell on these details. Some say there is enjoyment in looking back to painful experiences past; but at this day I can scarcely bear to review the times to which I allude.”⁸⁵ The importance of these events is heightened with this emphasis, even after a period of time has gone by. Narrator Jane knows what happens and has the ability to clear up confusions, but generally does not.

One of the most iconic and interesting aspects of the original novel is that Jane directly addresses the reader, calling attention to the fact that this story knows that it is a story. Jane as narrator uses these direct asides for two main purposes: to correct factual mistakes made by other characters, or to illuminate something that Jane at the time did not know but the reader should. One instance of the former is when Jane and Rochester are talking the morning after they become engaged: “I had green eyes, reader; but you must excuse the mistake: for him they were new-dyed, I suppose.”⁸⁶ While recording what Rochester said to her in the past, Narrator Jane

⁸⁵ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre: an authoritative text, contexts, criticism, 4th edition*, ed. Deborah Lutz (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016), 294.

⁸⁶ Brontë, 231

interjects with a correction. There are a few instances over the course of the text where Narrator Jane switches to the present tense from the past tense she uses for the rest of the novel. The present tense is used primarily with the direct addresses to the reader – the distance that exists when telling the main story is removed. However, there are other instances where the narrative of the past is portrayed with a present tense, such as when Jane is talking about the evening spent with Blanche Ingram and the other guests: “At last coffee is brought in, and the gentlemen are summoned. I sit in the shade – if any shade there be in this brilliantly lit apartment; the window curtain half hides me. Again the arch yawns: they come.”⁸⁷ The typical distance between the narration and the character is no longer present, as the narration at this point does not distinguish between Narrator Jane and Character Jane.

However, when looking at the web-series, we see that the context in which Jane is telling her story becomes more relevant than the distinction between narrator and character. In the novel, Jane is unable to share her story while she is experiencing it – there is no one at Thornfield to whom she can tell her experiences, and she must wait to retroactively speak her truth once the ordeal is over. In the web-series, Jane has an outlet for her experiences, her YouTube channel. The distance between the narrator and the character is lost, but this change is still within the realm of the characters actions. In essence there is still a distinction between character Jane and narrator Jane, except it becomes character Jane and editor Jane – while a much more immediate connection exists, Jane is still in control of what the story is and how the story is told.

When thinking about the narrative style of *Jane Eyre*, the web-series format is well suited for an adaptation – first person narration becomes direct engagement with the camera and

⁸⁷ Brontë, 157

the audience. One of the defining aspects of the original text is Jane's direct acknowledgment that she is telling a story, going so far as to directly refer to the reader when she is narrating. The most iconic line of the novel is Jane's announcement of her relationship with Rochester: "Reader, I married him."⁸⁸ The entirety of the web-series is an acknowledgment of the viewer in some regard, as Jane talks directly to the viewer. It is most obviously paralleled in the last episode, when Jane opens her video saying, "Dear viewer, today is Thursday."⁸⁹ Adaptations like Cary Joji Fukunaga's 2011 version or Susanna White's 2006 version remain in the third-person perspective, as very few films successfully use the first-person perspective. This limitation of standard film inhibits a deep connection between the audience and the characters – they lose their window into Jane's mind, lose the ability to look past her walls of composure to have a true understanding of her character. Jane's outward appearance is much less emotional and insightful than her inner monologue, so removing access to her thoughts loses a large part of her character. In a review of the 2011 adaptation, Chloe Schama and Hillary Kelly critique the film's inability to mediate between Jane's inner and outer voices, saying that "with no substitute for Jane's powerful inner voice, Fukunaga relies on expression and explosion."⁹⁰ By contrast, *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* allows Jane to express her thoughts – each video that is simply Jane and her camera, sitting in her room, provides a brief peek into her mind.

Audience members are invited to interact with the characters and engage with the plot on multiple levels. Like *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, all the major characters have Twitters and assorted social media accounts. These sites help to validate the events being shown on the

⁸⁸ Brontë, 399

⁸⁹ *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, episode 95, "Endings," directed by Nessa Aref, aired June 21, 2014.

⁹⁰ Chloe Schama and Hillary Kelly, "Failure to Adapt," *The New Republic*, Last modified March 22, 2011. <https://newrepublic.com/article/85547/jane-eyre-adapt-film-book>

videos, giving the world a more realistic feeling. Within the context of the videos, the audience sees the creation of Jane's Twitter, at the same time explaining the lack of activity: "So I got a Twitter account today ... don't really know how that works."⁹¹ Jane's videos offer more insight into her internal musings than the social media does – since this production was simpler than *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the breadth of social media activity is significantly limited. Instead of reacting to audience tweets or comments regularly, social media is used more as an expansion of the plot. Characters tweet at each other, establishing relationships to which Jane is not privy, like Rochester and Blanche's initial relationship.⁹²



The transmedia aspects do not tell their own story, the way the transmedia of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* did at times, but provide supplementary material to expand the world of the story. Jane's internal musings, emotions, and worries can be explored through the video blogs, depicting her inner state with an ease that must be ignored in traditional medias.

Modernization of the plot is critical for *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* to make it possible for Jane to be publishing her videos at all. In bringing the story forward in time, the creators of the videos worked with parts of the original text that were repressed and translated commentary on the nineteenth-century into commentary on the twenty-first-century.

Rochester's first marriage and the events resulting from it are also greatly modernized for this

⁹¹ *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, episode 7, "Big Houses," directed Nessa Aref, aired May 8, 2013.

⁹² "Blanche Ingram," Aug 17–18, 2013, <https://twitter.com/RoyalBlanche>

adaptation. Much like Lydia's elopement in *Pride and Prejudice*, Rochester's treatment of his first wife Bertha is highly dependent on the time period and the most difficult to reimagine. Instead of Bertha's mental instability leading Rochester to imprison her in the attic of Thornfield, 'Beth' struggles with addiction, to the point that she cannot be around her daughter and ultimately passes away: "But everything ... the drugs ... the alcohol ... the depression had all taken its toll. And she wasn't [Beth] anymore."⁹³ This allows for the possibility of redemption for Rochester's character – locking your wife in the attic is a more controversial act in the twenty-first-century than before. Rochester's actions still elicit the same reaction from Jane – though her reaction is more due to that he is still married and that she has been presented with concrete proof that he does not treat the people in his life well. Jane's video immediately after leaving Thornfield shows her conflicting feelings about the situation:

I need to get myself out of that space. I forgive him. I forgive him for everything and I know why he did it. I can't ... I can't let that situation continue. I owe it to myself to be better than that. I've talked about Helen. I've talked about my faith and now I need to live up to those things. I can't just ... talk about my principles and then not act on them. I need to go. I need to explore life more and learn some things about myself.⁹⁴

Jane knows that staying with Rochester after learning the truth would be wrong – her faith and her morals prevent her from staying. Religion is still a grounding factor for many people, 19th or 21st century, and this is a foundational aspect of Jane's character that connects these adaptations to each other.

The Autobiography of Jane Eyre focuses largely on female friendships and family, emphasizing Jane's relationship with the women in her life more than in the novel, highlighting a

⁹³ *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, episode 56, "The Truth," directed by Nessa Aref, aired Jan 9, 2014.

⁹⁴ *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, episode 57, "Departure," directed by Nessa Aref, aired Jan 11, 2014.

part of the story that was largely repressed in the original text. Roughly 90 of 400 pages of the original text is spent in Morton with the Rivers, Diana, Mary, and St. John – with emphasis on Jane’s relationship with St. John, both intellectually and romantically. In the web-series, Jane is with the Rivers from episode 58 until the end at episode 95, with six episodes spent with Adele, Grace, and, ultimately, Rochester. After Jane’s abrupt departure from Thornfield, instead of wandering around the English countryside until near death, Jane is mugged at a bus stop.⁹⁵ Jane’s transition to living with the Rivers siblings still leaves her in their care, but in a way that does not almost kill her. Once she is officially invited to stay with them, the focus of the videos is on expanding upon the relationship between Jane, Diana, and Mary – the relationships Jane gains with the Rivers sisters help her to grow as a person.



Again, like Lydia’s unexpected storyline alterations, *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* was forced to create a story that was not the writers original intent, but in doing so were able to comment on what was repressed in the original text. Instead of focusing on reuniting with Rochester, the series focuses on her motherly relationship with Adele, her sisterly relationship with Mary and Diana, and her friendship with Grace Poole. However, this switch is not to the detriment of the

⁹⁵ *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, episode 58, “I’m Okay,” directed by Nessa Aref, aired Jan 21, 2014.

series – one of its strengths is the relationships Jane has with the other female characters. Even if the ending of the videos feels rushed due to the loss of the actor playing Rochester, the storylines regarding Jane’s relationships with the women in her life – Diana and Mary Rivers, Grace Poole, and Adele Rochester – feel fully formed and concluded. Since there was such a strong emphasis on these non-romantic relationships, the loss of the actor playing Rochester was not as devastating as it would have been to a traditional adaptation.

The Autobiography of Jane Eyre takes the foundational aspects of web-series adaptations established by *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and uses them in different ways to tell the story in a way that fits the narrative. The filming locations and methods were expanded to help the story travel to so many different locations and transmedia storytelling was used for different reasons – less for interacting with audience and introducing characters and more for developing the characters already shown on camera and establishing relationships. Plot alterations were used as in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, to update the story for the modern time period the web-series inherently needs.

vii. Conclusion

Within the field of Adaptation Studies, there is still a focus on traditional cinema and television that leaves a gap in the literature on internet-based adaptations. This is a genre of media that has grown dramatically in the past decade or so with the increasing accessibility of the internet as a whole. While not a large percentage of all adaptations, web-series adaptations are a growing subset of adaptation medias and it is important to understand how adaptation studies as a field needs to grow to accommodate them. Adaptation studies is currently experiencing a moment of self-reflection, making this incorporation feasible. Much of the recent literature is focused on establishing the current role and place of adaptation studies and where the field might go in the future. Questions as to what is and is not an adaptation, the roles of previously key concepts, and where adaptation studies fits within the rest of film and media studies populate most literature currently being published. There is no simple answer to solve this dilemma, but there is a distinct oversight being perpetuated. Internet-based media is often ignored when considering these questions, even though it is becoming a large part of our media culture.

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries and *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* are two examples of the many web-series adaptations of classic novels that have been produced in the past decade. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* paved the way for all subsequent adaptations – the first in a long line of adaptations posted to YouTube. Combining a vlog-style video series with transmedia across numerous social media platforms and a foundation in direct interaction establishes these stories as all-encompassing and catering to society's desire to accumulate and interact with the content they are consuming. These adaptations give a new life to classic texts – introducing them to a new generation and changing the way people interact with the original material. While this

internet-based media is just another step forward in the trajectory of media formats, it also brings it all back to the original – book adaptations and sequels to *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* were published after the conclusion of the web-series. Austen's narrative had gone from a novel to a collective web of intermixing visual adaptations that all inform *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* back to the written novel – so who knows what is in store for the rest of these adaptations?

Adaptation studies is at a major crossroads due to the continuing increase in different types of media and there is an impulse to define what can and cannot be considered an adaptation. I believe that internet-based media is the future of content, as evidenced by the increasing number of streaming services and traditional media sites branching out to the internet, creating online-only series. Interactivity is also expanding to more and more media – giving the audience the ability to contribute to the story they are watching is appealing. These adaptations have been at the forefront of media evolution, using the new concepts which are now being integrated into more traditional media, combined with internet-specific features to bring classic narratives to a new audience. Web-series adaptations give new life to the content they are adapting and innovate the formats that they are using. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* were the beginning of an ongoing expansion onto the internet to tell stories, new and beloved, and this crossroads for the field of adaptation studies is the perfect moment for web-series to be incorporated.

Works Cited

- "Kalem Co. v. Harper Brothers, 222 U.S. 55 (1911)." Justia Law. Accessed January 12, 2019.
<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/222/55/>.
- "Bing Lee," Apr 21–22, 2012, https://twitter.com/bingliest/with_replies
- "Blanche Ingram," Aug 17–18, 2013, <https://twitter.com/RoyalBlanche>
- "Frequently Asked Questions," *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, accessed 18 January 2019,
<https://theautobiographyofja.wixsite.com/jane-eyre/faq>
- "The Lizzie Bennet Diaries," Facebook, accessed 3 December 2018,
<https://www.facebook.com/LizzieBennetDiaries/>.
- "Transmedia," *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, accessed 3 December 2018,
<http://theautobiographyofja.wixsite.com/jane-eyre/transmedia>.
- Aref, Nessa, and Alysso Hall, "The Autobiography of Jane Eyre" *YouTube*, 28 February 2013,
<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheAOJaneEyre>
- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice: an authoritative text, backgrounds and sources, criticism*. 3rd ed., Edited by Donald Gray. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001.
- Bazin, André. "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest." In *Bazin at Work*. Edited by Bert Cardullo. 32–40, Routledge, 1997.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre: an authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. 4th ed., Edited by Deborah Lutz. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016.
- Bruhn, Jørgen, Anne Gjelsvikk, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen. "There and Back Again': New challenges and new directions in adaptation studies." In *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*. edited by Jorgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, 1–16. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.

- Burgess, Jean and Joshua Green. "How YouTube Matters." In *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*. Malden: Polity Press, 2009.
- Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, London: Cornell University, 1978.
- Christian, Aymar Jean. "The Web as Television Reimagined? Online Networks and the Pursuit of Legacy Media." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* vol 36, issue 4 (2012). 340–356.
- Corrigan, Timothy. "Defining Adaptation." In *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, edited by Thomas Leitch, 23–35. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Corrigan, Timothy. "Literature on screen, a history: in the gap." In *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*. Edited by Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Daly, Kristen. "Cinema 3.0: The Interactive–Image." *Cinema Journal* vol 50, no. 1 (2010). 81–98.
- Elleström, Lars. "Adaptations within the field of media transformations." In *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*. edited by Jorgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, 113–132. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Green, Hank, "I am Hank Green, co–creator, executive producer, and occasional writer for The Lizzie Bennet Diaries," *Reddit*, accessed February 12, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/LizzieBennet/comments/13rx7y/i_am_hank_green_cocreator_executive_producer_and/
- Green, Hank. "I am Hank Green, co–creator, executive producer, and occasional writer for The Lizzie Bennet Diaries." *Reddit*, accessed February 12, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/LizzieBennet/comments/13rx7y/i_am_hank_green_cocreator_executive_producer_and/

- Henry Jenkins, Edutopia, “Henry Jenkins on Participatory Culture,” posted May 7, 2013.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gPm-c1wRsQ>
- Hutcheon, Linda. “Final Questions.” In *A Theory of Adaptation*. Abington: Routledge, 2013.
- Jandl, Silke. “The Lizzie Bennet Diaries: Adapting Jane Austen in the Internet Age.” AAA: *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, vol. 40, no. 1/2, 2015, pp. 167–196.
- Jenkins, Henry. “Transmedia Storytelling 101.” *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, 21 Mar. 2007, henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html.
- Jenkins, Henry. Introduction to *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- Johnson, David T., “Adaptation and Fidelity.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, edited by Thomas Leitch, 87–100. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Leitch, Thomas. “Adaptation and Intertextuality, or, What isn’t an Adaptation, and What Does it Matter?” In *A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation*. Edited by Deborah Cartmell, 87–104. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2012.
- Leitch, Thomas. “Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads.” *Adaptation* vol. 1, issue 1 (2008). 63–77.
- Leitch, Thomas. “The Ethics of Infidelity.” In *Adaptation Studies: New Approaches*. Edited by Christa Albrecht–Crane and Dennis Cutchins. Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corp., 2010.
- Murphy, Sheila. “From Tube to a ‘Series of Tubes’: Television in an as New Media.” *How Television Invented New Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011, 79–102.

- Neupert, Richard. "The French New Wave." In *Traditions in World Cinema*. Edited by Linda Bradley, R. Barton Palmer, and Steven Jay Schneider. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Transmedia Storytelling as Narrative Practice." In *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, edited by Thomas Leitch, 527–541. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Schama, Chloe and Hillary Kelly. "Failure to Adapt." *The New Republic*. Last modified March 22, 2011, <https://newrepublic.com/article/85547/jane-eyre-adapt-film-book>
- Schiller, Melanie. "Transmedia Storytelling: New Practices and Audiences." In *Stories*. Edited by Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever, 97–107. Amsterdam University Press: 2018.
- Schober, Regina. "Adaptation as connection – Transmediality reconsidered." In *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*, edited by Jorgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, 89–112. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Stam, Robert. "Revisionist Adaptation: Transtextuality, Cross–Cultural Dialogism, and Performative Infidelities." In *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, edited by Thomas Leitch, 239–250. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Su, Bernie, and Hank Green, "The Lizzie Bennet Diaries" *YouTube*, 9 April 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/user/LizzieBennet>
- Tepper, Allegra. "Lizzie in Real Life: Social and Narrative Immersion Through Transmedia in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*." *Film Matters*, vol. 6, no. 1, Apr. 2015, pp. 45–50.
- Tufekci, Zeynep. "We're building a dystopia just to make people click on ads." *TED Global*, New York City, September 2017.
- Vlogbrothers*, "Brotherhood 2.0: January 1st," aired January 1, 2007.